AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph at page 3, line 21 through page 4, line 4 with the following amended paragraph:

A method of hiding, ~~unhiding~~ revealing and selecting notification area items in a computer operating system having a graphical user interface is also provided. The graphical user interface includes a display and a user interface selection device. According to the method, the operating system will display hidden items and unhide a previously hidden item based upon a user selection or activity of the program or application associated with the hidden item. The user selected or system selected item is then placed and displayed in the notification area.

A2

Please replace the paragraph at page 12, line 19 through page 13, line 2 with the following amended paragraph:

As seen in FIG. 2, in step 206 previously hidden notification items may be "unhidden" by returning the associated icon 240A– 266A to the notification area. A number of predetermined conditions may exist which trigger the revealing of a previously hidden item ~~unhiding of an item~~. For example, when users select particular hidden icons or when the notification source changes the appearance of the icon or when balloon notifications are displayed, the icon is unhidden and displayed in the notification area.

A3

Please replace the paragraph at page 13, line 3 through page 13, line 18 with the following amended paragraph:

As stated above, the present invention involves monitoring notification area icons. FIG. 3 is a flow diagram illustrating a monitoring methodology involved in step 202 of FIG. 2. At step 210, an item is added to the notification area, similar to step 200 of FIG 2. After being added to the notification area, at step 212, the system monitors the item's activity to determine if the item has met the threshold time allowed for display. At the first occurrence of the threshold time limit, any items that have remained inactive for the entire threshold period are hidden, as indicated, at step 216. In this application, an item is defined as "inactive" if the associated icons have remained unchanged throughout the countdown period, have not been clicked on, nor have issued a balloon notification. Concurrent with the hiding of items, the notification area is rearranged at step 214 and a symbol is created that indicates to the user that an item has been hidden. At the first instance of an item being hidden, it is preferable to also include an explanatory communication indicating why the item was hidden, as well as, how it may be unhidden. For example, as best seen in FIG. 7, chevron icon 272 is created indicating an item has been hidden along with a balloon notification 270 explaining the hiding action and pointing to the chevron 272. The chevron 272 is only created if one does not already exist in the notification area as indicated in steps 213, 215 of FIG. 3 ~~FIG. 7~~.

A3

Please replace the paragraph at page 16, line 8 through page 17, line 3 with the following amended paragraph:

As stated above, the present invention also involves ~~unhiding~~ revealing previously hidden notification items. FIG. 4 is a flow diagram illustrating ~~an unhiding~~ a revealing methodology for the present invention. At step 220, single or multiple items have been hidden by the system based on the monitoring and hiding methodology described above. A user can display the hidden items by clicking on chevron 272 as illustrated in FIG. 11. Upon activating the chevron 272, all of the hidden icons 240A-266A are displayed. At step 222, the system determines if a user has selected a particular hidden icon. If the user selects an icon, the system will unhide the icon at step 226. When an icon is unhidden, it is again displayed in the notification area. Unhidden icons are placed in the notification area and arranged at the left-most position thereof in step 228. Chevron 272 is removed from the notification area when there are no more hidden icons. Continuing with FIG. 4, at step 224, the system determines if the appearance of a hidden item has changed, in other words, whether the program associated with the item has reactivated a request for user notification. For example, if an icon displays a balloon notification, the icon is unhidden and the timer that monitors the activity of the icon is reset. In this case, as in the situation where a user selects an icon, the system will unhide the item at step 226 and display the item in the left most position in the notification area at step 228. If nothing has changed with regard to a hidden item, and if the user has not selected a hidden icon, the system takes no action but continues to monitor for unhide events.

A4